2351

Good Friday.

Hearken, all ye people! ye nations strong,
That wage fierce war, from sense of fancied wrong,
And devastate fair earth! ye pure and meek!
Ye scoffing jesters, who vain pleasures seek!
Ye proud, who follow gold from night till morn,
And crush poor trusting hearts with bitter scorn!
Ye sick and poor, who faint with daily toil,
Scarce e'er can pray amid the world's turmoil!
Ye little children, who are hardly taught
In innocence to give one solemn thought!
Ye maim and old! ye sinners, who despair
And fear to turn to God with earnest prayer!
Oh all, give heed! away with cares and strife,
This day the Eternal Son laid down his life:
For us, He left His Father's throne above,
For us, He gave up seraph's praise and love;
And sinless, clad in our frail flesh did deign,
To share our sorrows and to suffer pain.
Behold what agony He meekly bore;
When tears in anguish down His face did pour!
So great the load, that e'en to him appears
An angel, strength'ning, sent to calm His fears.
Behold His patience when to judgment led,
And from Him those He loved like traitors fled.
He, who could have called His sons of light,
And crushed the world with His stupendous might,
Spit at! mocked! insulted! scourged!
Yet answer not! th ugh cruelly urged.
Can man spurn man, when to the end of time
There stands *this* act of gentleness sublime!
Who cannot weep, and hide his head with shame
At thoughts of this, to Him, so free from blame?
Who will not love Him, when a price like this
Was paid for sinful man's immortal bliss?
Behold Him nailed to th' accursed tree!
What tortures ere His Holy soul was free!
His thirst! His death! His agonizing cry!
The world affrighted from its course did fly.
All nature groaned, and in its wild dismay,
The sun refused its light on this sad day.
In darkness veiled, the rocks were rent in twain,
And earth did quake to see Him suffer pain.
E'en saints, in sorrow from their graves did rise,
To show their pity, anger, and surprise.
Angels ceased their hymns of praise above,
And silent stood, in majesty and love.
All hell amazed, from its basement shook,
And devils trembling, did not dare to look.
"It is finished!" at th' expectant cry,
Like lightning through the ethereal sky,
The list'ning angels wing their anxious way,
And round their Lord in thronging bright array,
With solemn chant, they strike their harps and sing—
Glory be to Thee, our Heavenly King!
Lift up your gates, celestial paradise!
Blest Jesus comes, sin's spotless sacrifice.
"It is finished!" Lov'd ones heard and wept,
Who round His cross their silent watch had kept,
And sadly they, with gentle hands resign,
His suff'ring body to fit marble shrine;
There watch'd unseen His warlike angels, till
Their risen Lord with light the earth should fill.

E. W. F.
Toronto, 1871.